



## ***Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing***

### **Homeowner Program Manual**





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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Homeowner Program Manual is to walk potential applicants through the process of applying for, and receiving *Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing*.

The program provides a creative, low-interest financing solution for Milwaukee homeowners interested in investing in solar energy. *Milwaukee Shines*, Milwaukee's solar program, has identified, through surveys of installers and residents, that one barrier to residential solar installations is the ability to secure affordable financing.

The City has partnered with Summit Credit Union to offer low-interest solar loans. Summit will offer up to \$2 million in solar loans. The program is kicking off with an "Early-Bird" solar incentive for the first 20 participants in the program. *Milwaukee Shines* is contributing \$120,000 to this partnership, which comes from a start-up donation from We Energies to support the City's solar program.

The solar financing program was sponsored by Alderman Tony Zielinski, passed by Common Council on July 6, 2011, and signed into law on July 11, 2011 by Mayor Tom Barrett. The history of the legislation can be found here: <http://j.mp/solarloanlegislativehistory>

*Milwaukee Shines* is also supported by the U.S. Department of Energy *Solar America Cities* program and local partner support. Visit <http://www.solaramericacities.energy.gov/> for details on this national program, which features 25 cities. For more information on the *Milwaukee Shines* program and how the City of Milwaukee is working to create a solar sustainable economy visit [www.MilwaukeeShines.com](http://www.MilwaukeeShines.com).

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414-286-5593  
[aheart@milwaukee.gov](mailto:aheart@milwaukee.gov)  
[www.MilwaukeeShines.com](http://www.MilwaukeeShines.com)

## GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

### SOLAR LOANS

**Program Size:** Up to \$2 million is available for solar energy installation loans

**Eligible Participants:** City of Milwaukee owner-occupied residential applicants (1-3 units)

**Loan Size:** Up to \$20,000

**Interest Rate:** Low-Interest Fixed Rate (as low as prime + 1.50%, up to prime + 2.25%)

**Terms:** Up to 15 years. No penalties for pre-payments, no fees, no down payments

**Eligible Projects:** Solar electric systems (up to 6kW) or solar hot water systems (1-8 panels). Projects must be installed by a Focus on Energy Residential Delivery Ally solar installer.

**Eligible Expenses:** All equipment, labor, permits, and interconnection fees. Structural re-enforcement and re-roofing expenses are eligible, if part of solar project.

**Application:** Application can be found at <http://city.milwaukee.gov/SolarLoans>

### EARLY-BIRD SOLAR INCENTIVE

We are offering the first 20 participants in the solar financing program a solar cash-back reward!

**Amount:** \$1,000 per approved solar installation

**Number:** 20 cash-back rewards will be offered on a first come, first serve basis.

**Eligibility:** Must have an approved application to *Milwaukee Shines*, have a completed project and a copy of check from Summit Credit Union to your installer. You have six (6) months to complete your solar project after receiving approval on application.

**Application:** Application can be found at <http://city.milwaukee.gov/SolarLoans>

## STEP BY STEP GUIDE

### RESEARCH AND PREPARE.

#### 1. Solar Site Assessment (recommended)

We recommend you get a solar site assessment from an MREA Certified Site Assessor. They can help determine what technology is best suited for your home and your price range (solar electric or solar hot water). There is a fee for the site assessment, so get a few bids before you decide on a site assessor. Find a site assessor at [www.mreacsa.org](http://www.mreacsa.org). Get more information on how to select a site assessor or what a site assessment can do for you on our “Find a Site Assessor” page: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/SelectSiteAssessor.htm>

#### 2. Energy Efficiency Upgrades (recommended)

If you make your home more energy efficient before your solar installation, you can maximize your WI Focus on Energy solar incentives. Details on our unique Milwaukee energy efficiency program, Me<sup>2</sup>, can be found here: [www.smartenergypays.com](http://www.smartenergypays.com)

#### 3. Get Bids on Your Solar Installation

We recommend you get 2-3 bids from solar installers before you make your selection. To qualify for the *Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing* program, the solar installer must be a registered “Focus on Energy Residential Delivery Ally.” A complete list of eligible residential system installers can be found at [www.finditwithfocus.com](http://www.finditwithfocus.com). Simply select that you are looking for a provider for your “home” in “Milwaukee County.” Then choose what technology you are looking for: solar electric or solar hot water. A list of approved installers will appear. *Be informed*: For tips on how to choose an installer visit: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/milwaukeeeshines/SelectInstaller.htm>

### APPLY FOR SOLAR LOAN. GET APPROVED.

#### 4. Apply for Solar Loan with Summit Credit Union

Apply and receive pre-approval of a *Milwaukee Shines Solar Loan*. It is recommended that you apply for the full \$20,000. To apply for the loan, complete the online application <http://j.mp/SummitSolarLoans>, apply by phone at 800-236-5560, or apply in person at a Summit Credit Union branch. Milwaukee area branch locations can be found on Page 8 of this manual, or online at <http://j.mp/SummitMkeBranches>

#### 5. Loan Decision Notification

In most instances the borrower will receive a decision on the loan request at the time they are meeting with the Summit Loan Officer. If you apply online, you may receive an immediate decision upon submission, or will be contacted by the Summit Loan Officer the same day, during normal business hours. If approved, a pre-approval letter itemizing the conditions of the loan approval will be issued to the borrower.

It is suggested that once you have written bid(s) from installers, you share that information with your Summit Loan Officer. This will ensure that you are approved for the appropriate loan amount to cover all costs before starting the project.

## APPLY FOR MILWAUKEE SHINES FINANCING PROGRAM. GET APPROVED.

- 6. Apply for Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing & Early-Bird Incentive** Complete the *Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing* Application found here: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/SolarLoans>. When you apply, you must provide the name of the installer you would like to select. *Milwaukee Shines* will verify that this is an eligible installer, so you will qualify for potential incentives. The first twenty participants in the program will receive a \$1,000 incentive to reduce the up-front cost of your solar project. This incentive will be sent directly to the installer, and should be reflected in their bid and final billing. Installer will be required to provide a copy of the final disbursement check from Summit Credit Union to receive payment. *You have 6 months to utilize this \$1,000 early-bird incentive, after you receive approval on your application.* You must have a completed project and disbursed loan within 6 months of receiving your approval letter. *You must receive a letter of approval from Milwaukee Shines before you contract with an installer, move forward with installation, close on your loan, or qualify for the \$1,000 cash-back incentive.*

## MOVE FORWARD WITH YOUR SOLAR PROJECT.

### 7. Select Solar Installer

Once you have an approved application, you can contract with your selected solar installer. Work with your installer to ensure that you will receive all the appropriate incentives, and that they provide the necessary paperwork to close on loan. Your installer will provide you with information on other incentives available for your solar project including a 30% federal tax credit and Wisconsin Focus on Energy incentives. For details on current incentive programs: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/milwaukeeeshines/Incentives.htm>.

### 8. Gather Documents For Closing

Once the solar installation is complete, you need to submit necessary paperwork to Summit Credit Union to your Summit Loan Officer to close on the loan. You need to provide the following:

- a. Copy of *Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing* Approval Letter (from *Milwaukee Shines*)
- b. Copy of final city inspection (obtained from your installer)
- c. Copy of We Energies interconnection agreement (obtained from your installer)
- d. Copy of final invoice for your solar project (obtained from your installer)

To expedite the closing process, it is preferred that this documentation outlined above is scanned and emailed to [consumerloanprocessing@summitcreditunion.com](mailto:consumerloanprocessing@summitcreditunion.com) or faxed to 608-661-3443. We

understand this may not be possible in all circumstances and if that is the case, please provide documentation to your Summit Loan Officer

#### **9. Close on Your Loan**

The loan closing will be scheduled with you, once Summit has received the documentation outlined above. The closing will take place at the Summit branch that is the most convenient for you. Summit will disburse the loan proceeds payable directly to the installer by check. The check will be mailed to the address provided on the final invoice for the project. If the installer has an account with Summit, the funds can be deposited to their account they designate.

## **ENJOY YOUR NEW SOLAR INSTALLATION**

Enjoy your new solar installation. We encourage you to share your experience with others. Let us know if you would like to be part of the annual Milwaukee Solar Tour and the larger Wisconsin Solar Tour. Visit the Wisconsin Solar Tour website: [www.midwestrenew.org/solartour](http://www.midwestrenew.org/solartour).

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Milwaukee Shines

City of Milwaukee's Solar Program  
[www.MilwaukeeShines.com](http://www.MilwaukeeShines.com)

Amy Heart, Solar Program Manager  
414-286-5593  
[aheart@milwaukee.gov](mailto:aheart@milwaukee.gov)

### Summit Credit Union

[www.summitcreditunion.com](http://www.summitcreditunion.com)  
1-800-236-5560

### Milwaukee Branches

#### **Brown Deer Road Branch**

6914 W. Brown Deer Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53223

#### **Greenfield Avenue Branch**

10015 W Greenfield Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53214

#### **West Milwaukee, Journal Branch**

2159 Miller Park Way  
West Milwaukee, WI 53219



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing* program was initiated and designed by the City of Milwaukee's solar program, *Milwaukee Shines* through the Office of Environmental Sustainability. On behalf of the Office of Environmental Sustainability, we would like to thank Mayor Tom Barrett for his leadership on increasing investment in clean energy and creating green jobs for the community. We would also like to thank our Milwaukee Common Council sponsor, Alderman Tony Zielinski, as well as all Common Council members for their continued support to increase in the interest and investment in solar energy. Their determination in making clean energy accessible through this innovative financing program is key to creating a sustainable solar economy and a cleaner environment.

Additionally, we would like to thank our local partners and the U.S. Department of Energy *Solar America Cities* program for their generous funding and technical assistance to the program. We Energies' contribution helped to make this program a reality. We are appreciative that Summit Credit Union expressed interest in partnering for this innovative project, and is dedicated to moving forward to offer low-interest solar loans for our community.

Thank you to area installers, site assessors, and industry supporters who have invested in this community and are leading the way to a sustainable solar economy.

Last but not least, we thank you, the resident, for your interest and investment in clean energy. You are an inspiration and an integral part of our office's goal to create and promote a citywide vision for making Milwaukee a more economic, environmental and socially sustainable place to call home.

Thank you!

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